**Plant Cuttings - September 2022**

# Sexual deception: orchid tricks and traps gnat in pollen den – Australian Geographic, 3 August 2022

A new study has described how a sexually deceptive orchid, Pterostylis cycnocephala, exploits the sexual preferences of their male pollinators to achieve pollen transfer. This orchid attracts its pollinator, the male gnat, Bradysia (Diptera: Sciaridae), with the ‘perfume’ of a female gnat and a black appendage that looks like a female gnat. The male then courts the apparent female with wing fanning and abdomen curling, before clasping the flower with its genitalia and rotating 180° as they attempt to assume their regular mating position. This movement triggers a ‘booby trap’ where the plant snaps shut, and he must climb out becoming covered in pollen in the process, says one of the study’s researchers, PhD candidate Tobias Hayashi. <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/news/2022/08/sexual-deception-orchid-tricks-and-traps-gnat-in-pollen-den/>

# The race to save fungus-threatened plants from extinction – ABC, 31 August 2022

Sydney's on track for its wettest year ever, and now botanists are scrambling to save entire plant species that are under the threat of extinction from diseases that thrive in the rain. A fungus of dire concern has already spread well beyond the east coast, so scientists have turned their efforts to developing seedlings of plants that will be able to fight off the threat. <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/pm/race-to-save-plants-from-extinction-threat/101392954?utm_campaign=abc_radio_pm&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_radio_pm>

**NSW Auditor-General issues stern criticism of state's biodiversity offset scheme – ABC, 1 September 2022**

The New South Wales Auditor-General has found the government has failed to deliver an effective biodiversity offset scheme because its policy had no strategy or safeguards. Under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, the scheme enables landholders to establish in-perpetuity Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements on sites to generate credits for the unique biodiversity on that land. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2022-09-01/nsw-biodiversity-offset-schemes-criticised-by-auditor-general/101391042>

# Western NSW landholders call for more resources to fight Hudson pear spread – ABC, 5 September 2022

Farmers and residents in Lightning Ridge are calling for more support to control a growing infestation of a state-declared noxious weed in north-west New South Wales.Hudson pear is a highly invasive cactus that was brought to Australia sometime in the 1960s. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-05/hudson-pear-biosecurity-invasive-north-west-nsw/101395948?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=mail&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web>

# Ten days to plant 6000 native orchids? Easy for army of volunteers – The Sydney Morning Herald, 11 September 2022

# Spending 10 days on your hands and knees in regional NSW planting more than 6000 native orchids isn’t for everyone. But for more than 40 volunteers, listening to the birds singing and swapping a few jokes helped during the long hours of trying to save the plant species from going extinct. <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/ten-days-to-plant-6000-native-orchids-easy-for-army-of-volunteers-20220908-p5bgc4.html>

# Native seed garden a lifeline for Kangaroo Island's endangered flora – ABC, 18 September 2022

In the summer of 2019–20, Kangaroo Island recorded its most devastating bushfires on record. The island, located off the mainland of South Australia, is home to nearly 900 native plant varieties and is an ecological haven due to its isolated, unspoilt natural environment. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2022-09-18/kangaroo-island-seed-garden-saving-endangered-flora/101448952>

# Invasive soil-borne disease made worse by wet weather, threatens bunya pines – ABC, 21 September 2022

Hundreds of ancient bunya pines in a Southern Queensland National Park are facing a growing threat as wet weather heightens the spread of an invasive soil-borne disease. The recent rain and upcoming [third La Niña summer](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-18/rain-forecast-when-la-nina-end-summer-flooding/101446044) present the perfect conditions for phytophthora to spread which has researchers, park rangers and traditional owners of the Bunya Mountains National Park worried. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-21/wet-conditions-make-worse-a-serious-threat-killing-bunya-trees/101460316?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=mail&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web>

# Events and Opportunities

**Webinar recording – Aliens Among Us**

A recording of the invasive Species Council’s webinar of 19 September, ‘Aliens Among Us’, is now on line at [www.invasives.org.au/resources/aliens-among-us-the-qa-sessions/](http://www.invasives.org.au/resources/aliens-among-us-the-qa-sessions/) The webinar focuses on the threat from invasive species as highlighted in the 2021 *State of the Environment Report* released a few weeks ago.  Panel members include Dr Barry Hunter, a co-author of the report's Land chapter, Tim Low a writer and biologist and Richard Swain, an Invasive Species Council Indigenous Ambassador.

**Save the date – 2023 Science Communicators’ Conference**

The Australian Science Communicators will be holding their next conference in Canberra on 15-17 February 2023. This will be an in person event with some online accessibility options. Please contact them if you are interested in joining the organising committee, more info to come soon. <https://www.asc.asn.au/blog/2022/09/05/the-2023-science-communicators-conference/>

**Save the date –2023**
The International Conservation Translocation Conference is being held in Fremantle, Western Australia next year from 13-15 November 2023. No further information available but save the date in your calendar!

**ESA-SCBO 2022 Conference “Reconnecting”**

The conference of the Ecological Society of Australia and the Society for Conservation Biology Oceania will be held in Wollongong, NSW from 28 November to 2 December 2022. ESA-SCBO 2022 will be an in-person conference but a limited number of online options. The theme for this event is “reconnecting”, registrations are now open. <https://www.esascbo2022.org.au/>